

**ANTH-215 Sex, Gender, Culture (Online Session F)**  
**(3 credits = 15 hours expected work per week)**

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**Professor:** Siobhán McGuirk  
siobhan.mcguirk@american.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesday, 4-6pm (EST)  
Wednesday, 12-2pm (EST)  
*and by appointment*

**Virtual Office:** Skype username – Siobhán McGuirk  
*Please mention course code ANTH 215  
when adding me as a contact!*

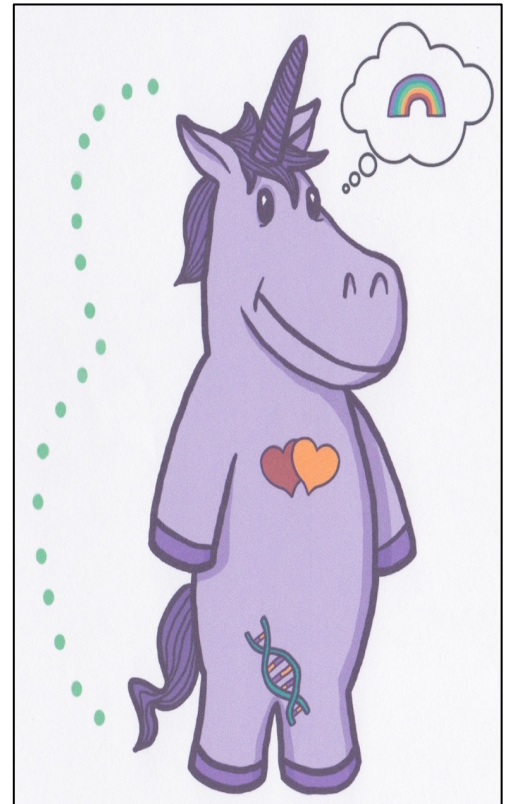
Google Hangout - *Links posted via  
Blackboard every session*

**Response time:** I will respond to emails within 24 hours  
I will return coursework within 60 hours

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**Teaching Assistant:** Joeva Rock  
**Email:** joeva.rock@american.edu

**Office Hours:** Monday 11am-1pm (EST)  
**Skype name:** joeva.rock



*"The Gender Unicorn" by Landyn Pan  
See: [www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)*

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION, OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE**

**Course Description:**

In this course we will engage with literature and films from the social sciences and popular culture on sex, gender, and sexuality. This course is based on the idea that gender and sexuality are fluid and changeable, as well as awareness that cultural norms determine the possibilities for sexual and gendered expressions of the self.

We will theorize personal choices, identities, and communities through understanding identities as intersecting, multiple, in flux, and contradictory. We will pay special attention to the intersections of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and national affiliation. We will critically access how power and inequality shape our gendered experiences.

Students will consider their own experiences and conceptions of human behavior in light of course material to critically assess how ideas and knowledge about race, sex, gender, and sexuality inform our lives. Topics include scientific discourses, the medical construction of sex, gender and sexuality, the lives of trans and other non-binary gendered people, capitalism, imperialism and power, and cosmopolitan sexualities. The examples covered in class will draw from peoples and cultures around the world.

### Important Notes on Online Summer Courses:

1. This is an extremely intensive semester. We're packing three credits into only seven weeks(!) You should expect to work **15 hours per week** on this course, and plan your time accordingly. I will be assigning a lot of readings, videos and a few small tasks each week, along with a few larger assignments. If you skip over content, it will be obvious from your work. It is your responsibility to keep track of deadlines and to work to schedule – read this syllabus carefully and check your email regularly.
2. Many of you will be used to interacting online, which should help you in this environment. However, please do not forget that this online course is still a formal educational setting. I expect all students to be professional, punctual, respectful and thoughtful in their attitude and language use.

### Course Objectives:

In this course, you will learn about anthropological approaches to gender, sex and sexuality, and gain knowledge of cross-cultural values pertaining to gender, sex, and sexuality. You begin to engage critically with the concept and construction of social norms. You will be able to consider how sex, gender, and sexuality are constructed, performed, subverted, and transgressed in a variety of cultural contexts.

You will also learn how structural factors shape human lives, identities and choices, and how differences such as race, class, ability, faith, nationality, and economic status shape the way that peoples understand and express gender, sex and sexuality. Finally, you will come to understand how power and inequality shape how we perceive, enact, and enforce ideas about gender, sex, and sexuality.

### Learning Outcomes:

Through successful completion of this course, you will enhance your critical thinking, reading and writing skills. In particular, you will be able to:

- Describe how anthropologists approach the study of sex, sexuality and gender
- Challenge essentialisms of sex, sexuality and gender through cross-cultural analysis
- Define the meaning of “social constructionism”
- Connect categorization (whether scientific, social, or otherwise) to power

- Critically evaluate pop culture products, such as adverts and TV shows
- Evaluate and explain how structural factors shape human lives and decisions, and how differences such as race, class, nationality, and economic status shape the way that people make sense of gender and sexuality
- Explain how history or social science can be used to analyze contemporary issues and to develop policies for social change
- Explore the ways in which we are all complicit in perpetuating gendered forms of subjugation, and examine how we might interrupt that complicity

I have designed assignments and grading rubrics to measure how successfully you meet these outcomes.

### Required Textbooks/ Other Materials:

**All readings and other materials will be posted to Blackboard.** These will be organized into folders for each week. There are no required textbooks for this course.

I have chosen readings for this course from a range of sources. These will act as an anchor for discussion, to be complimented by film clips, lecture slides, articles, and experiential learning. Our readings and discussions will address topics that some may find controversial and that may challenge cherished beliefs, spiritual and personal. We must all make a special effort to be tolerant of all opinions. After all, it is the diversity of those opinions that makes anthropology fascinating!

### My Expectations of You:

*Ongoing engagement is crucial to success* in this class. I expect advance notice for any work you will miss or will be delayed handing in, for medical reasons (with a doctor's note), family emergency, or observation of a religious holiday – although I expect you to plan ahead in the latter case.

Missing any assignments will *seriously* affect your grade. Being habitually late to submit work – including discussion participation – will also affect your grade. Be considerate of your classmates, TA and professor and engage with us *on time*.

In addition to written assignments, *careful reading and active participation in discussions are the most important elements of this course*. Active participation requires thoughtful engagement with your peers. Sign on to Blackboard / class activities ready to discuss course materials, read others' comments carefully and to interact with your classmates. You will be graded on the quality, rather than the quantity of your participation.

See rubrics and guides on Blackboard for a more in-depth explanation of my expectations for each assignment.

### **What You Can Expect of Me:**

You will be able to contact me via email, skype, Google Hangouts and/ or BlackBoard. I will respond promptly to your questions, and I will engage with your ideas and comments thoughtfully and respectfully. I will remain open to feedback throughout the semester, and be responsive to your requests to clarify and/ or further explain concepts and other teaching points. I will give you sufficient advance notice of any changes to syllabus, but will aim as far as possible to stick to what you see here.

### **What You Should Expect of Each Other:**

For the duration of the semester this class is a community. Our class is a space for intellectual exploration and expression. Many of the topics we discuss are emotionally charged. Pay attention to what your personal reactions are, and be sensitive to yourself and your classmates. The success of the class as a whole depends on each person supporting, encouraging, and respecting the others. Continuing discussion outside of class is highly encouraged. However, please be mindful of the privacy of your peers: Do not repost comments outside of classroom environments.

## II. CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1 (June 29 – July 5): Culture, Norms, Gender and Sex

#### Watch:

- Activity: Kate Bornstein's Gender Aptitude Test (adapted version)
- Micro Lecture: Introducing the Course

#### Read:

- Eagleton, Terry (1991) "What is Ideology?" in *Ideology: An Introduction*. Verso Press. Pp.1-31.
- Gottlieb, Alma (2002) "Interpreting Gender and Sexuality: Approaches from Cultural Anthropology" In *Exotic No More: Anthropology on the front lines*, Jeremy MacClancy (ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 167-189.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2000) "Chapter 1: Dueling Dualisms" In *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. Basic Books. pp. 1-29.

#### Watch / Listen:

- "What stands in the way?" *BBC News* (44 min)

#### Assignments due:

- Monday, June 29, 9pm EST: "About me!" – introduce yourself to your classmates via Blackboard, and upload a photo (or avatar of your choosing) to your profile.
- Tuesday, June 30, 9pm EST: Discussion question
- Friday, July 3, 9pm EST: Discussion responses (2)
- Sunday, July 5, 9pm EST: Critical reflection

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### Week 2 (July 6 - 12): Science, Categories and Regulated Bodies

#### Read:

- Sheehan, Elizabeth (1981). "Victorian Clitoridectomy: Isaac Baker Brown and His Harmless Operative Procedure" *Medical Anthropology Newsletter*. pp. 9-15.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne (1995). "Gender, Race and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of 'Hottentot' Women in Europe, 1815–1817." pp. 19-48. In *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*.

#### Watch:

- *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman: "The Hottentot Venus"* (1998) 53 mins.
- Micro Lecture 2.1: "Scientifically" sexing, gendering and racializing bodies

#### Read:

- Martin, Emily (1991) "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs* 16(3): 485-501.
- Kessler, Suzanne. 1990. "The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexual Infants." pp. 3-26. *Signs*.

#### Watch:

- XXXY (2000) 13 mins.

Assignments due:

- Tuesday, July 7, 9pm EST: Discussion question
  - Friday, July 10, 9pm EST: Discussion responses (2)
  - Sunday, July 12, 9pm EST: Critical reflection
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Week 3 (July 13 – 19): Socially Constructing / Regulating Gender and Sexuality

Watch:

- Micro-Lecture 3: Patriarchy and Heteronormativity

Read:

- Powdermaker, Hortense (1932). "Feasts in New Ireland; The Social Function of Eating." *American Anthropologist* 34(2): 236–247.
- Brandes, Stanley (1981). "Like Wounded Stags: Male Sexual Ideology in an Andalusian Town." In *Sexual Meanings, the Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, edited by Sherry B Ortner, 216–239. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pascoe, C.J. (2007). "Dude, You're a Fag" pp.52-83. In *Dude, You're A Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*.
- Holten, Emma (2014) "Consent: An Objection" In *HYSTERIA #5*. Published online.

Watch/ Listen:

- Selection of Public Service / Educational Films , 1950s-present
- Podcast: "Dreaded "Otherness": Heteronormative Patrolling in Women's Body Hair Rebellions"

Explore:

- New York Film Academy Infographic: "Inequality in Film"

Assignments due:

- Tuesday, July 14, 9pm EST: Discussion question
  - Friday, July 17, 9pm EST: Discussion responses (2)
  - Sunday, July 19, 9pm EST: Critical Reflection
  - Sunday, July 19, 9pm EST: Outline for Cultural Analysis Project
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### Week 4 (July 20 – 26): Gender Diversity

Watch:

- Micro Lecture 4: Gender Diversity

Read:

- Valentine, David (2007). "Introduction." In *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. pp. 3-28
- Kulick, Don (1997) "The Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes." *American Anthropologist* 99 (3): 574-585.
- Sinnott, Megan (2004). "Gender Ambivalence in Tom and Dee Identities". In *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-sex Relationships in Thailand*. pp. 76-110.

Listen:

- BBC Documentaries, "The Hijras of India" (2007)
- BBC World Have Your Say (excerpt 31:50mins - end), "Indian Court Recognizes Third Gender" (2014)

Explore:

- BUTCH, a photo project from Meg Allen Studio.

Watch:

- *Paris is Burning* (1991) 1hr 18mins, Dir. Jennie Livingston
- Optional reading: hooks, bell (1992) "Is Paris Burning?" in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. pp.145-156.

Assignments due:

- Tuesday, July 21, 9pm EST: Discussion question
- Friday July 24, 9pm EST: Discussion responses (2)
- Sunday, July 26, 9pm EST: Critical reflection

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### Week 5 (July 27 – August 2): Sexuality Matters

Watch:

- Micro Lecture: LGBTQ – and Beyond

Read:

- Weeks, Jeffrey (2003). "The Language of Sex" and "The Invention of Sexuality." In *Sexuality: 2nd Edition*. pp. 1-40.
- Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock (2012) "Introduction" and "Setting the Historical Stage: Colonial Legacies" In *Queer Injustice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States*
- Rubin, Gayle (1984). *Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality*
- Johnson, Patrick E. (2011) "Sweet Magnolias: Love and Relationships" In *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South (Revised Edition)* University of North Carolina Press. pp.430-472.

Listen:

- Audre Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic” (online)

Watch:

- Selection of Queer Short Films (posted to Blackboard)

Explore:

- Read the short article “Home Office says Nigerian asylum-seeker can’t be a lesbian as she’s got children” in *The Independent* THEN take the quiz, “Does the Home Office Think You’re Gay?” in *The Mirror*.

Assignments due:

- Tuesday, July 21, 9pm EST: Discussion question
- Friday, July 24, 9pm EST: Discussion responses (2)
- Sunday, July 26, 9pm EST: Critical reflection

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**Week 6 (August 3 - 9): Gender, Sexuality and Capitalism**

Watch:

- Micro Lecture 6: Buying Into Gender and Sexuality

Read:

- Henson, Nancy (1984). “The Selling of P.M.S.” In *Science* 5(4): 67-71.
- Strate, Lance (1992). “Beer commercials: A manual on masculinity” In Steve Craig ed. *Men, Masculinity, and the Media*
- Chin, Elizabeth (1999). “Ethnically Correct Dolls: Toying with the Race Industry” pp. 305-321. *American Anthropologist*.
- Maglaty, Jeanne (2011) “When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink?” In *Smithsonian Magazine*. (online)
- Bloomberg “Toymakers See Profit in Going 'Gender Neutral'” (online)

Watch:

- *Killing Us Softly 4* (2010) 45mins. Writer: Jean Kilborne, Dir: Sut Jhally
- “Bic For Her” clip from *Ellen*

Explore:

- Mattel.com

Assignments due:

- Tuesday, August 4, 9pm EST: Discussion question
- Friday August 7, 9pm EST: Discussion responses (2)
- Sunday, August 9, 9pm EST: Cultural Analysis Project



Week 7 (August 10 - 13): Violence, Activism and (In)Justice – or, why ANTH-215 matters

Watch:

- Micro Lecture 7.1: Regulation 2.0?

Read:

- Abu Lughod, Lila (2002) “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others” in *American Anthropologist* 104(3): 783-790.
- Yoruba, Cosmic (2013) “Homosexuality and African history: the roots of the criminalization of homosexuality” (online)

Watch:

- *A Veiled Revolution* (1982) Dir. Marilyn Gaunt, 26 mins.

Watch:

- Micro Lecture 7.2: Regulation 2.0?

Read:

- Meronek, Toshio (2015) “Human Rights Campaign Under Fire in LGBT Community” Truthout.org (online)
- Politt, Katha (2015) “There's a Reason Gay Marriage Is Winning, While Abortion Rights Are Losing” *The Nation*

Watch:

- Kate Bornstein’s Gender Aptitude Test (short version)

Assignments due:

- Tuesday, August 11, 9pm EST: Discussion – reflections on the course
- Thursday, August 13, **5pm EST**: Final exam (Questions released Monday, August 10, 9am EST)

NOTE THE DATE OF YOUR EXAM!

### III. CLASS DETAILS: ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING BREAKDOWN

#### Assignments:

You will be graded on four areas – **(1) thoughtful participation, (2) weekly critical reflections, (3) Cultural Analysis Project** and a **(4) Final Exam**. I briefly describe each below. See Blackboard for further guidance and instructions, under the “Handouts and How To” link.

**Thoughtful participation (30%):** This is divided into two sections:

- a) **Discussion Boards (21%):** Each week, you will submit **one** discussion question to the Blackboard Discussion Board by Tuesday, 9pm EST. These should be based on one, or a combination of the assigned readings. You will join another discussion thread / reply to **at least two** more times – engaging in discussions on multiple threads started by your classmates – by Friday, 9pm EST.
- b) **Google Hangouts (9%):** You must attend a Google Hangout with your Professor and Classmates **at least twice during the semester** – once in weeks 1-2 and once in weeks 5-6 of the semester. Additional sessions will be arranged for those who are not available during regular office hours.

**Critical reflections (25%):** I will assign a prompt for critical reflection each Monday by 9am EST. You will write a response of maximum 200 words, to be submitted by the following Sunday, at 9pm EST. These should be written in a word document (or equivalent), using double-spaced text, in 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Please include your name on the document and remember to *properly* reference any work cited. See the “How To” folder on Bb for guidance.

**Cultural Analysis Project (25%):** Choose an advert, TV show clip, or music video to analyze, drawing on course materials. The work submitted should be a visual presentation, not an essay. I will post further details of this assignment as a separate document, on Blackboard, together with links to all the technological resources you may need. Your project proposal (5%) is due Sunday, July 19. Your final project is due Sunday, August 9, (9pm EST).

**Final exam (20%):** Two essay questions, covering course materials. The exam questions will be released via Blackboard on Monday August 10 at 9am, and are due by Thursday August 13, 5pm EST.

#### Submitting assignments:

You will upload all of your assignments through Blackboard. Please see the instructional video in the Announcements page of our course Blackboard site for detailed instructions. You should watch this in good time before your first assignment is due.

### Grading:

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Thoughtful participation	21%	(3% weekly discussion)	Each Tues/ Fri
	9%	(4.5% per Hangout)	In weeks 1-2 and 5-6
5 Critical reflections	25%	(5% each week)	Each Sun except weeks 6 & 7
Cultural Analysis	25%		Due August 9, 9pm EST
Final Exam	20%		Due August 13, 5pm EST
Improvement/ effort		up to 5 bonus points	

### Grades:

Excellent: accurate, original and thoughtful	100-90 (A)
Good: engaged and competent	89-80 (B)
Satisfactory	79-70 (C)
Unsatisfactory or incomplete	69-60 (D)
Failure to meet minimum course requirements	59 and below

### How to access grades:

You can check your grades by clicking “My Grades” under Course Tools on Blackboard, after the grade for each assessment task is released.

### Rubrics (how I will grade your work):

There are different rubrics for each assignment. These are posted on Blackboard.

Note: You **will** lose points for late submissions.

I will not grade work submitted more than 2 days late (unless there is an emergency).

I will not grade exams submitted late.

## IV. OFFICIAL BUSINESS: UNIVERSITY POLICIES ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, SUPPORT SERVICES AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### General Education Credit:

There are no prerequisites for this course. It is part of the foundational courses in Curricular Area 3, Global and Multicultural Perspectives, in the university’s General Education Program. Please see your academic advisor if you have questions about your eligibility for Gen Ed enrollment in this class.

### Course Evaluation:

As required by AU academic regulations, every student must complete an evaluation for each enrolled course at the end of the semester. A link to an online instructional assessment form will be emailed to you for your confidential use.

## **ONLINE COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Technical Requirements:**

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience.

#### **- Laptops/ Computers:**

Students will be asked to furnish their own laptop or desktop computer to be used for accessing the Blackboard system and coursework.

#### **- Blackboard Course Access and Navigation:**

This course was developed using a web course tool called Blackboard. Students will use their AU account to login at: <https://blackboard.american.edu/>

I recommend that you Bookmark this site so that you can easily find it. You *may* also want to obtain a webcam, microphone, and headphones to allow for synchronous face-to-face video and voice interaction on Skype and other software. These are optional – not required. More information can be found on Blackboard's Tutorial page.

### **Blackboard Support:**

Students should immediately report any problems to their course instructor and also contact the Blackboard Support Center at [blackboard@american.edu](mailto:blackboard@american.edu) or call (202)885-3904 for 24/7 support. Students can also log onto <http://help.blackboard.com/student/index.htm> for support.

### **AU Help Desk (focuses on all other IT issues):**

Answers to your technology questions are just an e-mail, instant message, or phone call away. Contact the IT Help Desk at 202-885-2550, [helpdesk@american.edu](mailto:helpdesk@american.edu), or AskAmericanUHelp to reach one of our professional staff who can answer your questions and provide general troubleshooting assistance. Students can also log onto <http://www.american.edu/oit/Need-Help-Now.cfm> for support.

### **Policy on Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties :**

The university is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the professor may extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation.

## **UNIVERSITY INFORMATION**

### **Academic Support and Access Center:**

In addition to using the resources available in this course's department, all students may take advantage of individual academic counseling, skills workshops, tutor referrals, Supplemental Instruction, and writing appointments in the Academic Support and Access Center.

(202) 885-6225 // MGC 243

Students with Disabilities: If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is requested.

**Counseling Center:**

The Counseling Center offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

(202) 885-3500

MGC 214

**Writing Center:**

The Writing Center offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. The Center offers appointments on the hour from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, and 3 to 6 p.m. on Sundays. Call or go to the Writing Lab scheduling website to arrange a session.

(202) 885-2991

First Floor of Bender Library

**Center for Diversity & Inclusion:**

The Center for Diversity & Inclusion is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, Multicultural, First Generation, and Women's experiences on campus and to advance AU's commitment to respecting & valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. In addition to visiting in person or calling, the center can be reached via email at [cdi@american.edu](mailto:cdi@american.edu).

(202) 885-3651

MGC 201 & 202

**Dean of Students Office:**

The Dean of Students Office offers one-on-one meetings to discuss academic, adjustment, and personal issues that may be interfering with a student's ability to succeed academically. The DOS office also verifies documentation for students who have medical or mental health issues that cause them to be absent from class.

(202) 885-3300

Butler Pavilion 208

**Emergency Preparedness for Disruption of Classes:**

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use

of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU Web site for Emergency Preparedness and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.

### **Academic Integrity Code:**

Standards of academic conduct are governed by the University's Academic Integrity Code. By enrolling in the university and registering for this course, you acknowledge your familiarity with the Code and pledge to abide by it. All suspected violations of the Code will be immediately referred to the Office of the Dean. Disciplinary action, including failure for the course, suspension, or dismissal, may result.

Additional information about the Code (i.e. acceptable forms of collaboration, definitions of plagiarism, use of sources including the Internet, and the adjudication process) can be found in a number of places including the University's Academic Regulations, Student Handbook, and Academic Integrity Code website. If you have any questions about academic integrity or standards of conduct in this course, please discuss them with your instructor.

Undergraduate Research Support: <http://www.american.edu/provost/undergrad/research.cfm>

### **An additional note on plagiarism:**

Submitted work must be your own. Do not 'borrow' ideas or wording from friends, other authors, or the internet. If you use another person's work, you MUST cite it properly. In addition to plagiarizing others, it is possible to plagiarize oneself when using your own previously written material without proper citation. To avoid self-plagiarism and related academic dishonesty, cite all material that you have written for any purposes other than for this class.

*Acknowledgements: This syllabus is inspired by courses designed and taught by colleagues at American University. Thanks to Dr. Elijah Edelman, Dr. Melissa Hackman, Dr. Adrienne Pine, and Dr. Nell Haynes for their guidance, input and support.*